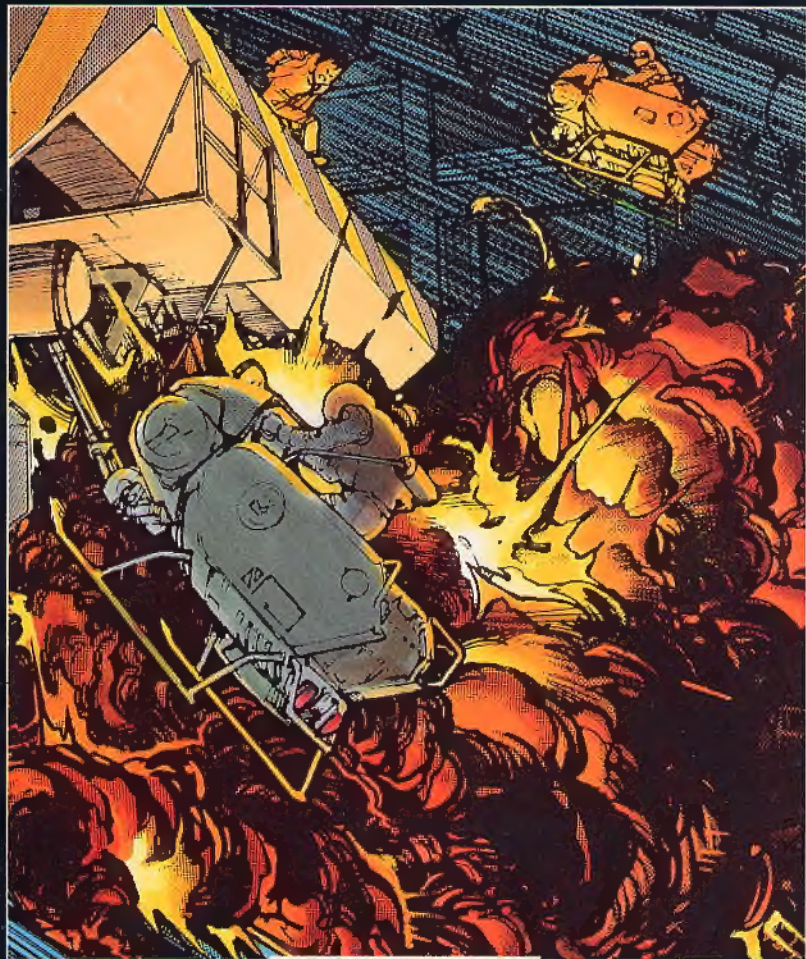



# AKIRA 9



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KATSUHIRO OTOMO



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# AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

CHAPTER 9

**STALKERS**



## WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

**T**he year is 2030. The world is rebuilding from World War III. In **Neo-Tokyo**, plans are being made to hold the next Olympics in the "old city"—where, thirty-eight years before, the first of the bombs fell.

**Kaneda** and his friends, teenage delinquents, make an unauthorized motorcycle run into the old city to check out the old site. They encounter a terrified child, known only as **Number 26**, possessing extraordinary telekinetic abilities. During the encounter, the paranormal boy gravely injures **Tetsuo**, one of Kaneda's close friends. Then, he vanishes.

The next night, at **Harukiya**, a tough local dive, **Kaneda** attempts, unsuccessfully, to pick up a newcomer, **Kay**. In fact, she and her companion, **Ryu**, are part of an underground resistance group dedicated to learning what is happening in the old city and putting a stop to it.

Trouble ensues, and both delinquents and resistance fighters again encounter

**Number 26**. Then the ominous **Colonel** in charge of the covert operation appears with a secret weapon—**Number 27**, a crippled paranormal child named **Masaru**. **Masaru** astonishes the resistance fighters by addressing **Number 26** as **Takashi**. **Kay** and **Ryu** had previously assumed that **Number 26** was the Colonel's ultimate weapon—the as-yet unseen paranormal giant code-named **Akira**. **Kaneda** is separated from the resistance fighters, but he manages to intercept and hide a pill meant for **Takashi**, who is recaptured by the Colonel's men.

**Tetsuo**—who following his accident was taken to a hospital by soldiers serving the **Colonel**—is taken from school by the **Colonel** after his recovery. Under the treatments of the Colonel's chief medical officer, **Tetsuo** exhibits powerful telekinetic abilities...and undergoes great pain. Finally, **Tetsuo** breaks out of the Colonel's installation, using his burgeoning powers to slaughter all who oppose him.

Meanwhile, **Kaneda**, trying to learn what is happening to **Tetsuo**, re-encounters the members of the resistance, and is brought back to their



Kaneda



Tetsuo



Kay



Ryu

headquarters. Questioned by **Ryu**, he denies all knowledge of the stolen drug. When soldiers enter the resistance hideout in force, **Kaneda** and **Kay** manage together to escape to **Harukiya**, where the bartender agrees to shelter them. A spy from the Colonel's organization learns of their hideout, but he is caught and left for dead by a resistance fighter.

**Kiyoko**, another of the psychic children under the Colonel's control, announces that **Akira**—who is asleep, and expected to remain so for some time—is going to awaken in the near future.

At **Harukiya**, **Yamagata** and **Kaneda**'s other friends tell of **Tetsuo**'s new powers and of his bloodthirstiness. **Kaneda** and **Yamagata** lead the local street gangs on an all-out attack to stop **Tetsuo**. Then the **Colonel**, alerted by his informant, arrives at **Harukiya**, and forces the bartender to tell him where the fugitives have gone.

**Yamagata** and his team corner **Tetsuo** in a warehouse. Most of the gang dies, and **Kaneda** reaches the scene in time to see **Tetsuo** brutally kill **Yamagata**. Enraged, **Kaneda** shoots **Tetsuo**...who survives.

As the **Colonel** arrives,

**Tetsuo** grabs and swallows the drug **Kaneda** had hidden, apparently dying of an overdose. A few minutes later, the terrible delinquent recovers, more powerful than ever, and the elated **Colonel** rechristens him **Number 41**.

Back at the Colonel's installation, **Tetsuo**'s body shrugs off the effects of his wounds... and his mind continues its descent into madness and evil. Eavesdropping on the **Colonel** and his doctor, he is intrigued to learn that he is not unique, and that other paranormals possess talents he lacks.

**Ryu**, working undercover at a construction site next to the Colonel's base, meets with **Nezu**, who publicly leads the governmental opposition party but secretly is a resistance leader as well, and they share new evidence on the scale of the **Akira** project. **Nezu**, in turn, consults **Lady Miyako**, the head of a powerful religious cult of which **Nezu** is a leader, **Lady Miyako** who bears the **Number 19** on her hand marking her as one of the Colonel's series, and she warns of impending catastrophes which may be linked to **Akira**.

**Kiyoko**, **Takashi** and **Masaru** fear **Tetsuo**'s power and



**Takashi**



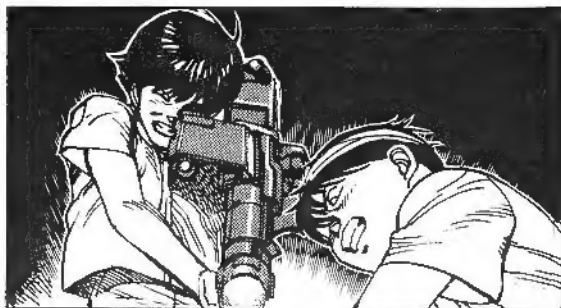
**The Colonel**



**Masaru**



**Yamagata**



discuss plans to hinder him. Then **Kay**—who, like **Kaneda**—has been brought to the installation under guard, escapes, displaying a variety of psychic powers, including telekinesis and teleportation. She attacks **Tetsuo**, almost killing him, and helps **Kaneda** to shake off his guards, acting like a sleepwalker the whole time. As guards close in on the escapees, **Tetsuo** quizzes the doctor about **Akira**, and learns that his chief rival is trapped in cryogenic sleep. During the course of the conversation, the doctor is stunned to learn that **Tetsuo** can now read minds.

**Kay**, still somnolent most of the time, takes **Kaneda** into the armory where they help themselves to the one weapon that may work against **Tetsuo**—a laser. Meanwhile, the **Colonel** had deduced the source of Kay's new powers—she is being manipulated by **Kiyoko**.

Confronting **Masaru, Takashi** and **Kiyoko**, the **Colonel** is joined by **Tetsuo**, who has learned of his "rivals" by reading the doctor's mind and come to torment them. He recognizes **Takashi** as the one who injured him out on the highway and attacks the three children, forcing them to fight for their lives.

**Tetsuo** demands to be told **Akira's** location, and the doctor urges the **Colonel** to reveal it, suggesting that **Tetsuo** might be just what they need—a paranormal powerful enough to control **Akira**. When the **Colonel** refuses, **Tetsuo** turns on him, knocking him out. Guided by **Kiyoko**, **Kaneda** and **Kay** reach the nursery and attack. To escape the laser, **Tetsuo** jumps out the window of the skyscraper...landing unhurt in the street below. **Kay** asks **Kiyoko** to reveal the secret of **Akira**, and **Kiyoko** does, telling her that **Akira** is **Number 28**.



**Nezu**



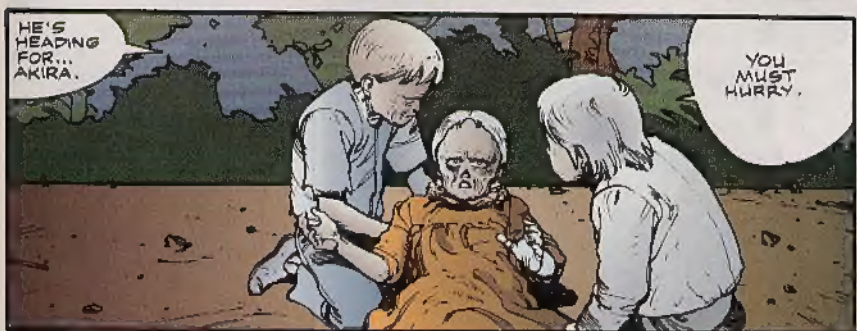
**Kiyoko**



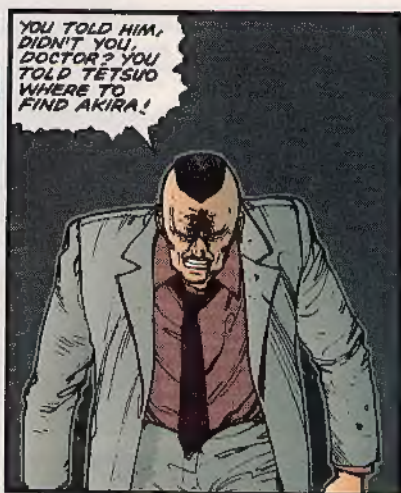
**Bartender**



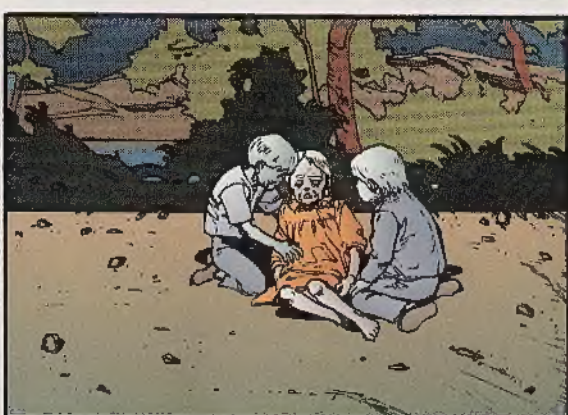
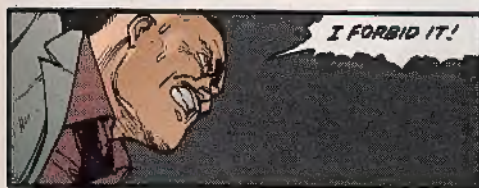
**Clown**





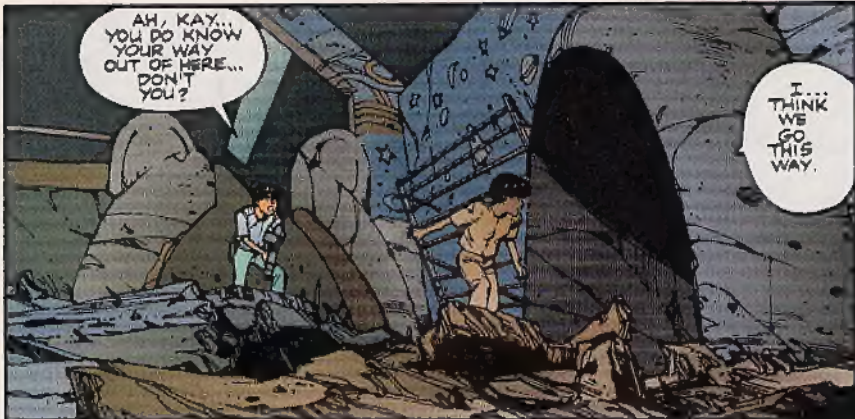




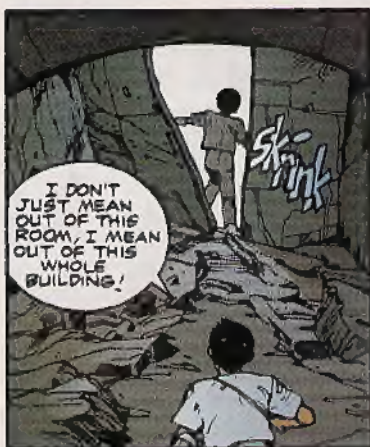


AH, KAY...  
YOU DO KNOW  
YOUR WAY  
OUT OF HERE...  
DON'T  
YOU?

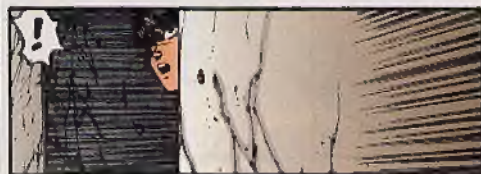
I...  
THINK  
WE  
GO  
THIS  
WAY.



I DON'T  
JUST MEAN  
OUT OF THIS  
ROOM, I MEAN  
OUT OF THIS  
WHOLE  
BUILDING!



WAIT  
A  
SEC.

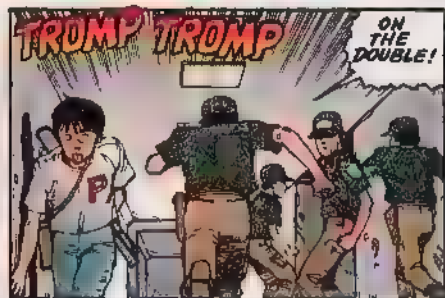
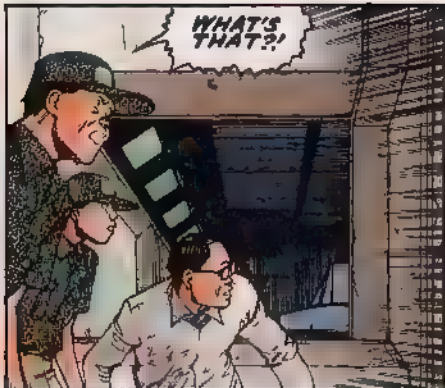
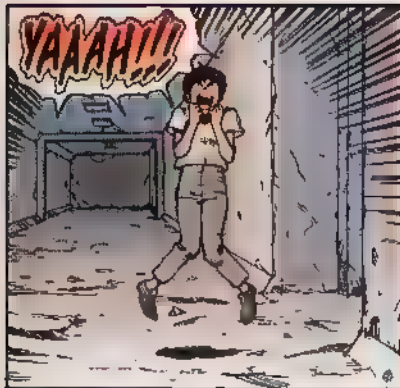


WHAT?!

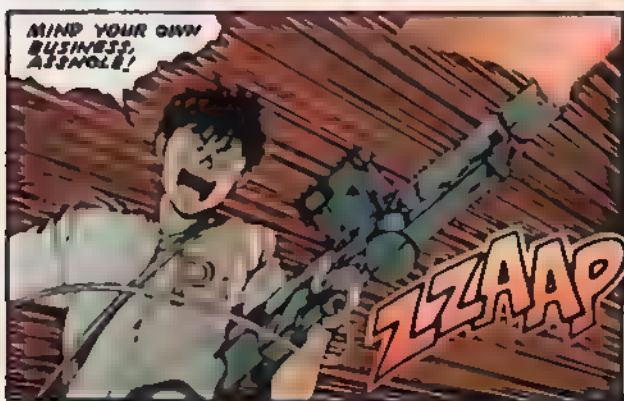
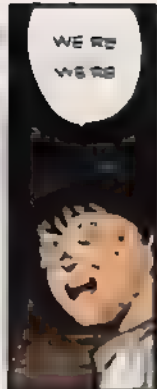
IS THE COLONEL  
IN THERE?!

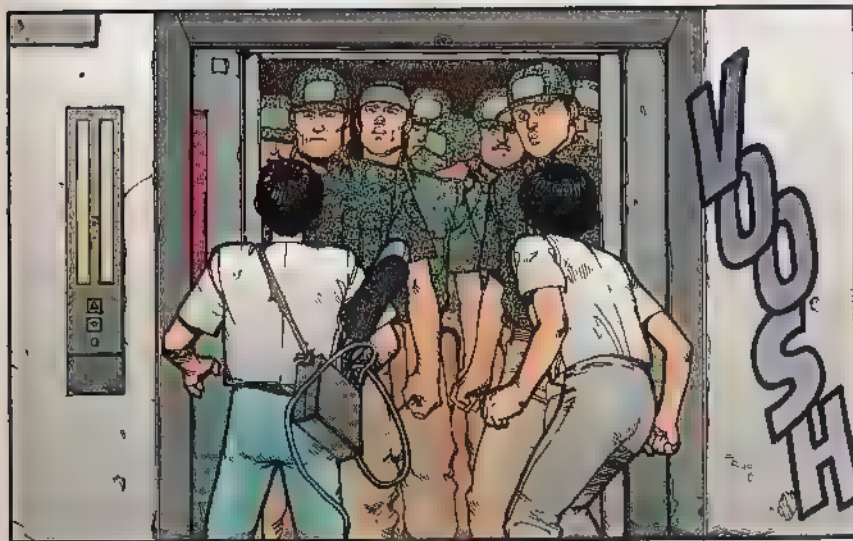


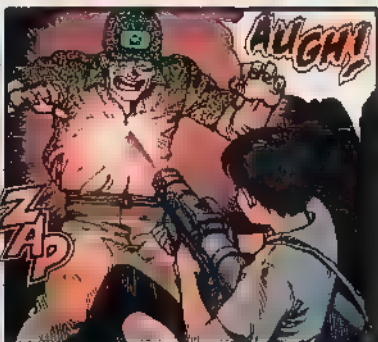
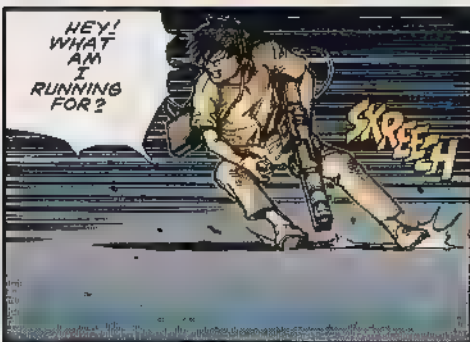




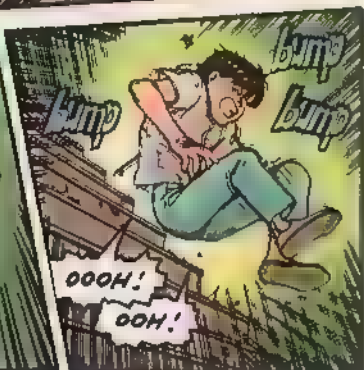
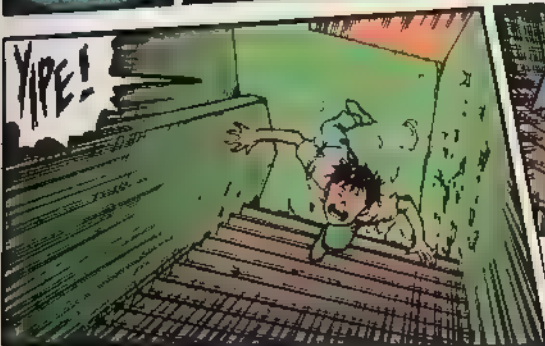
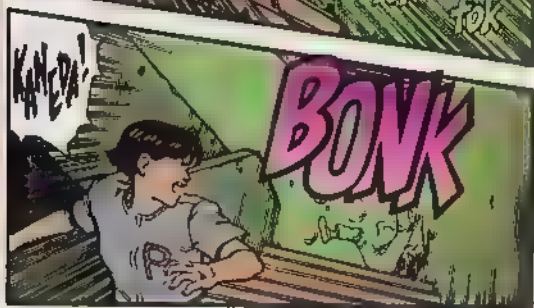
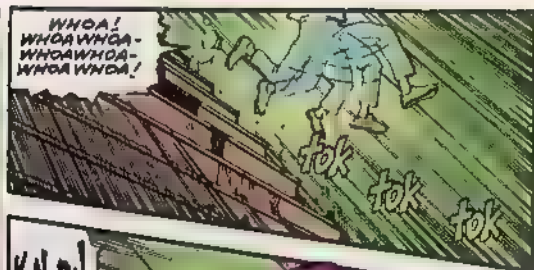
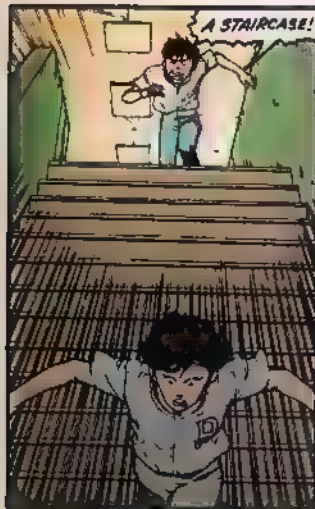


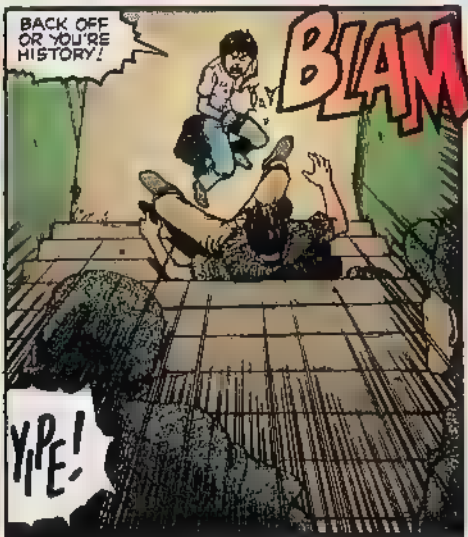


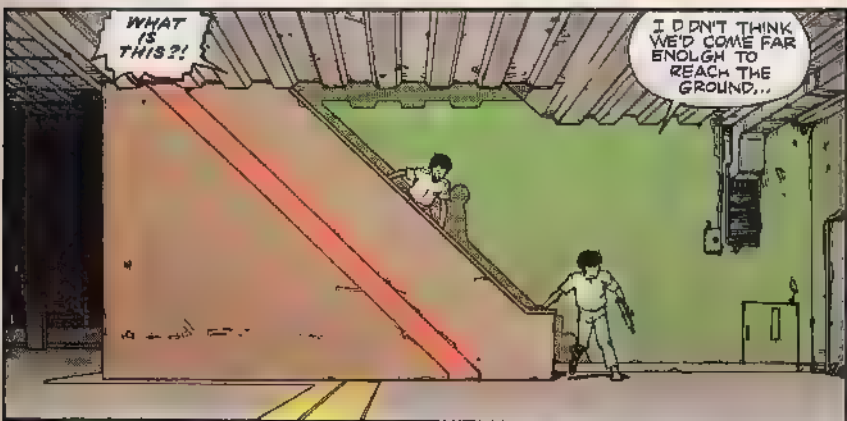
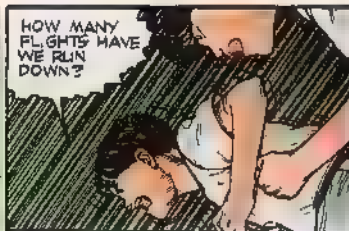




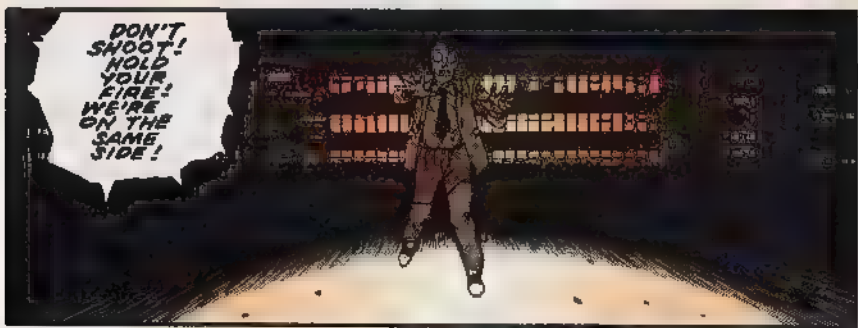


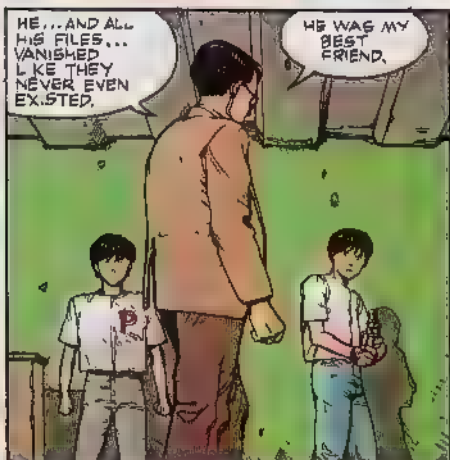
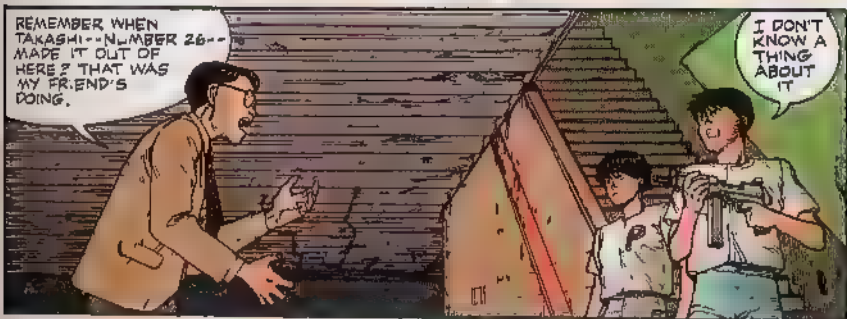
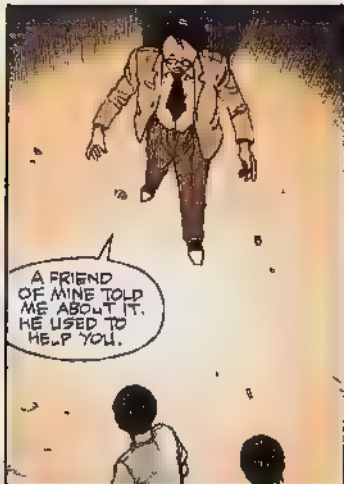


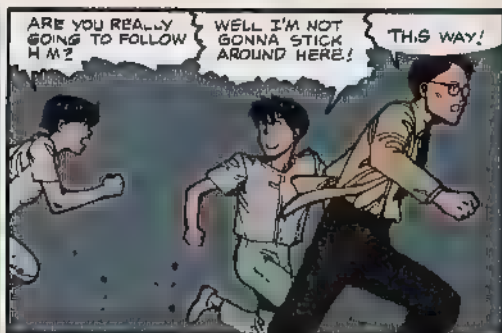
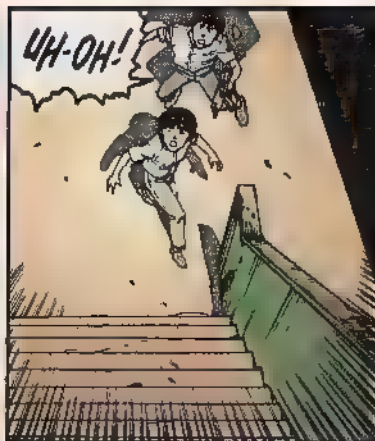
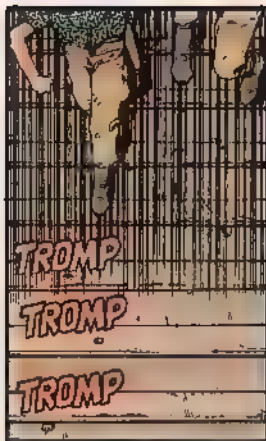








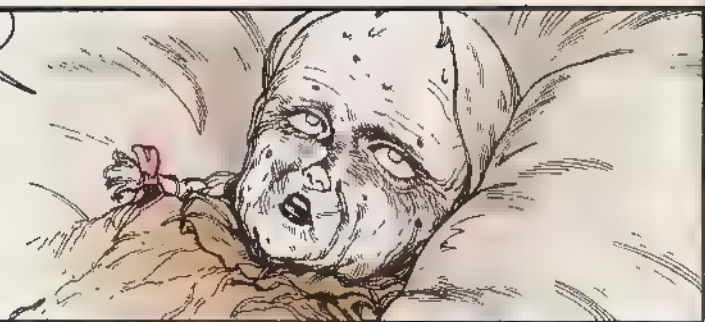






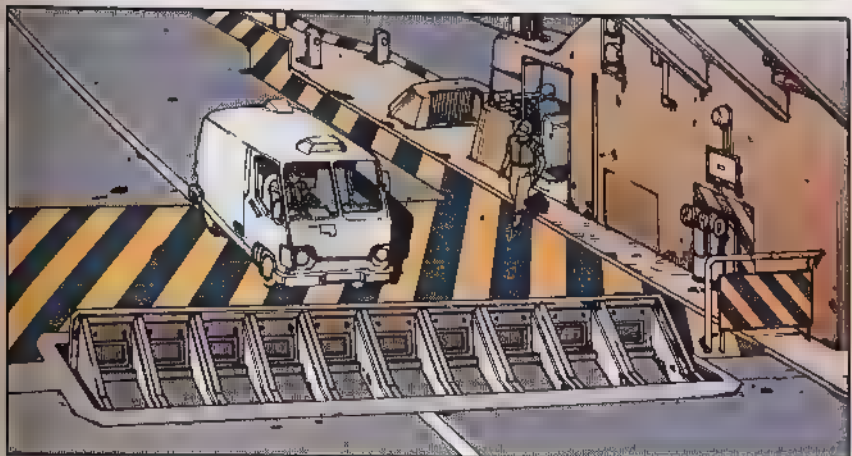
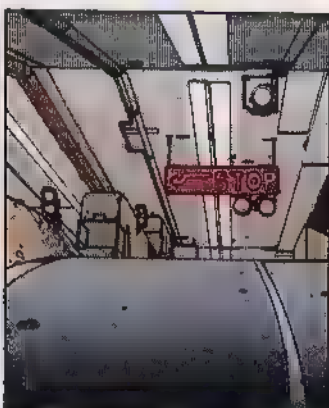
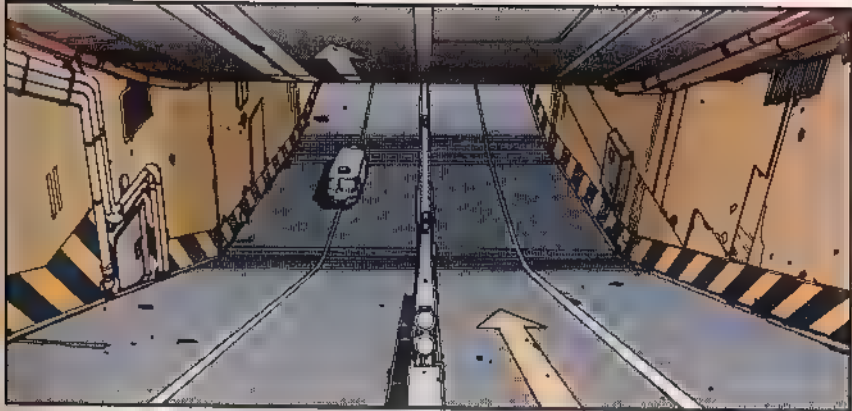


...CONTROL THE  
FUTURE.

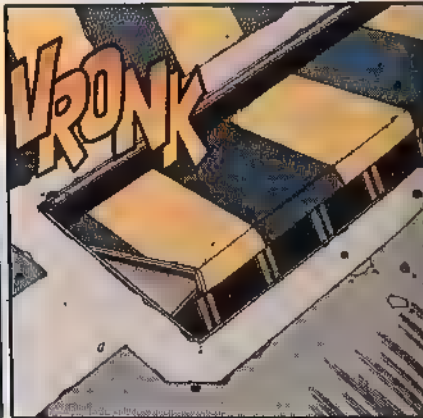
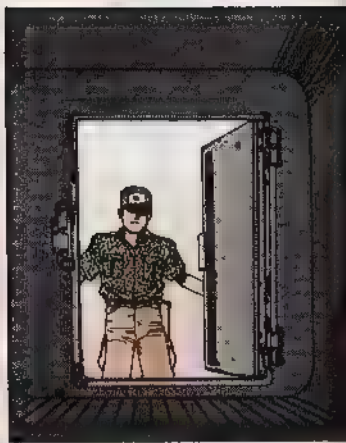
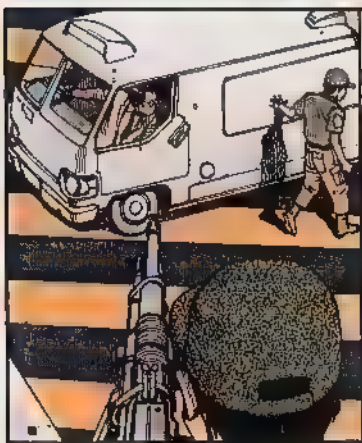
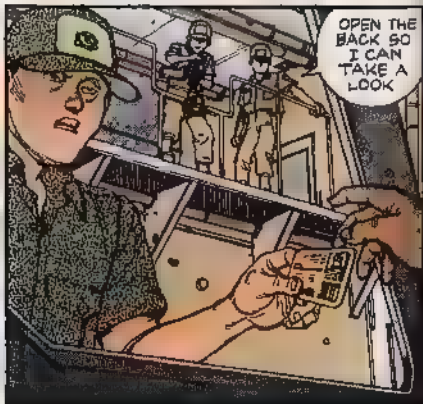
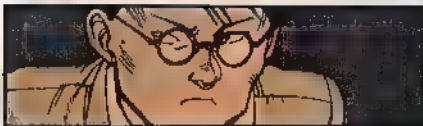
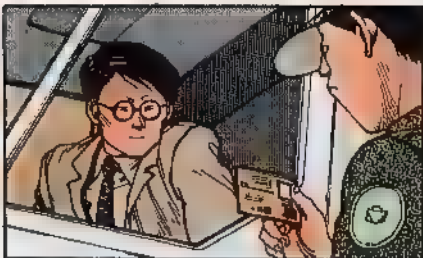


THERE  
IS NOT JUST  
ONE PATH!

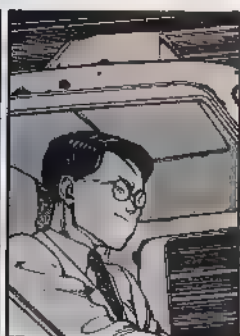
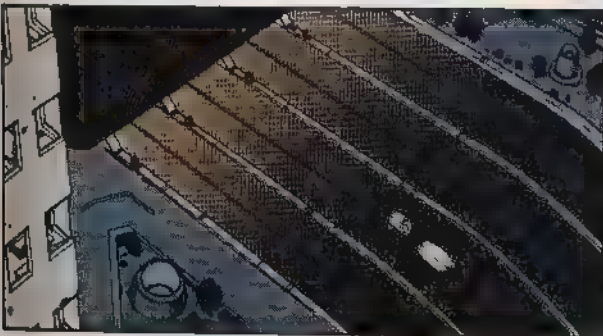
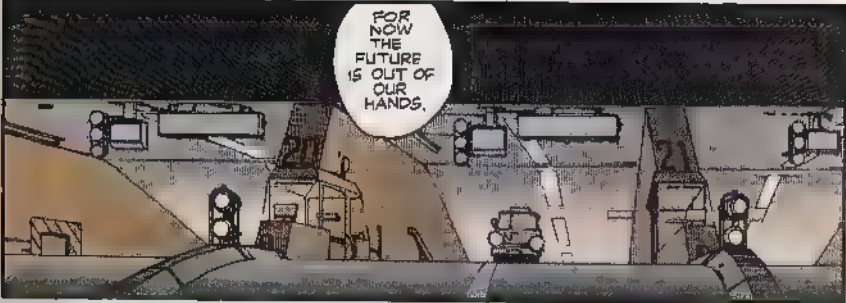






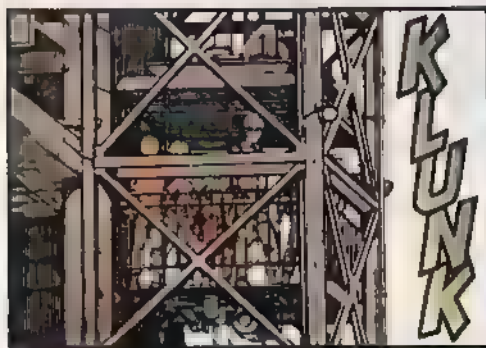


FOR  
NOW  
THE  
FUTURE  
IS OUT OF  
OUR  
HANDS.

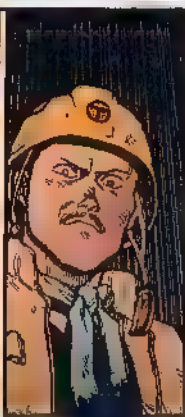
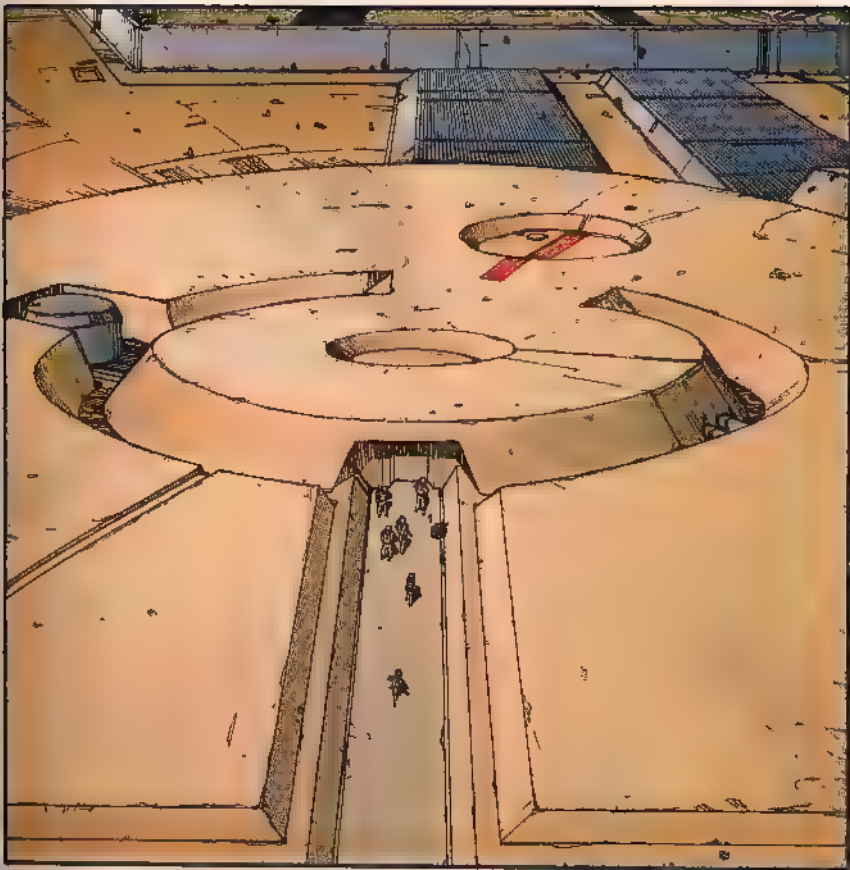


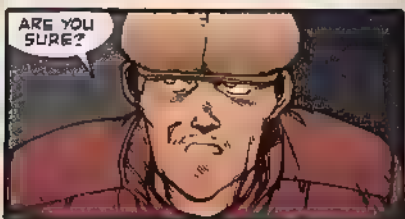
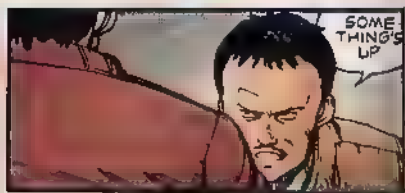
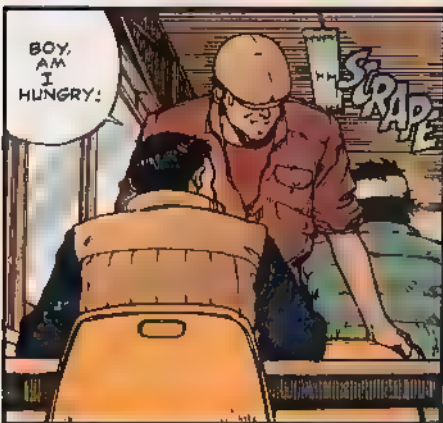
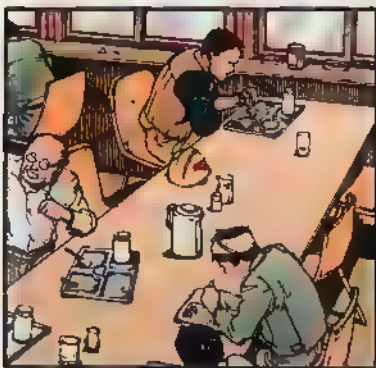
WHAT  
HAPPENS  
NEXT  
S  
UP  
TO  
THE  
TWO  
OF  
THEM.

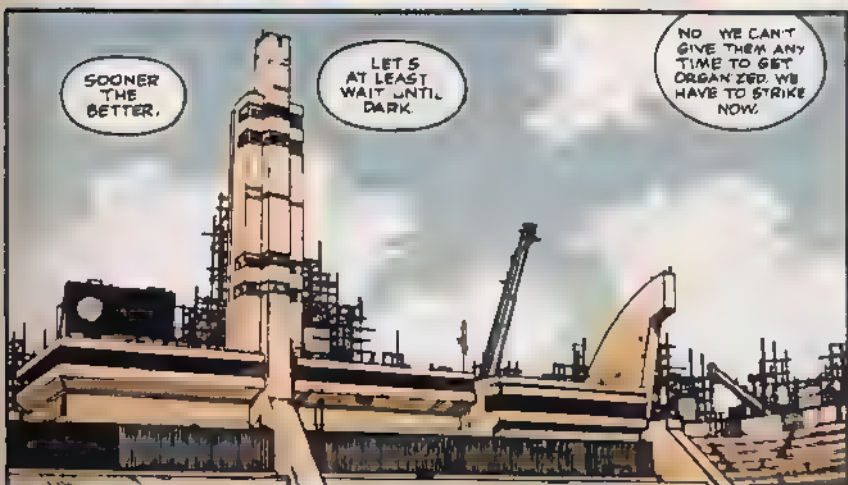
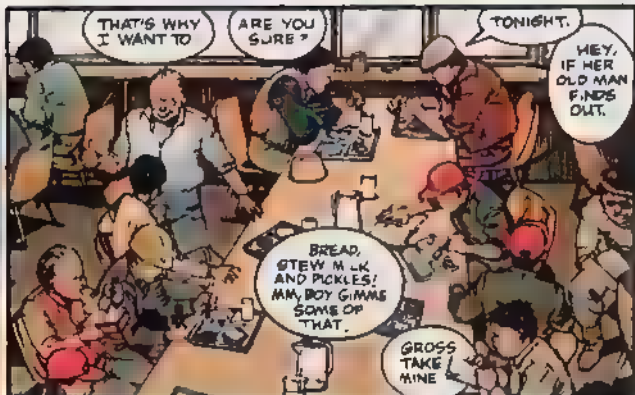
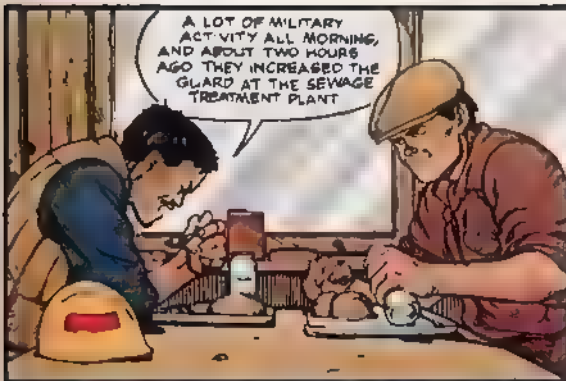




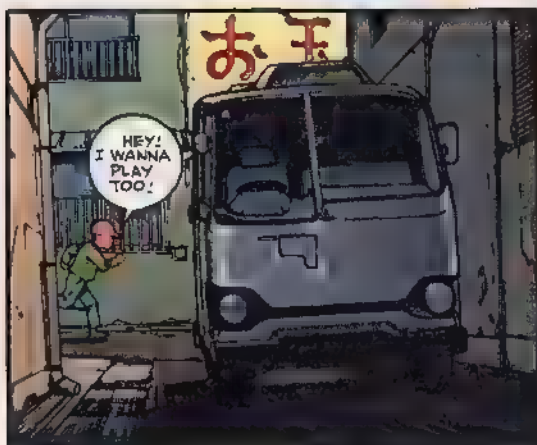
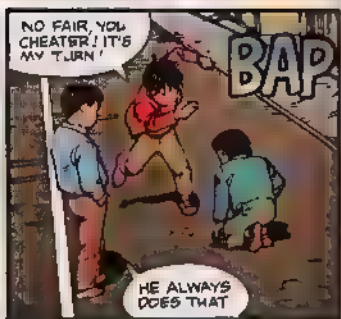
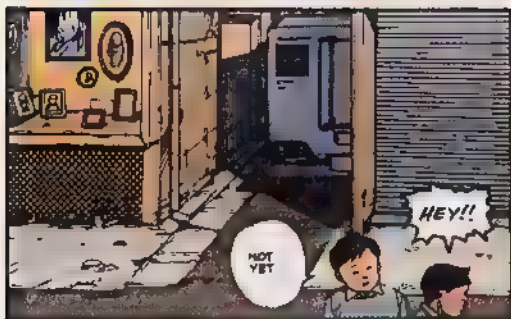
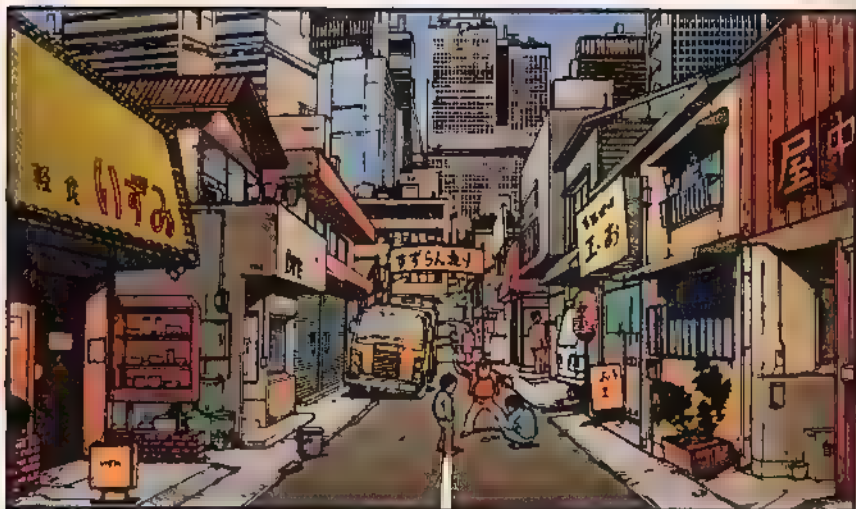


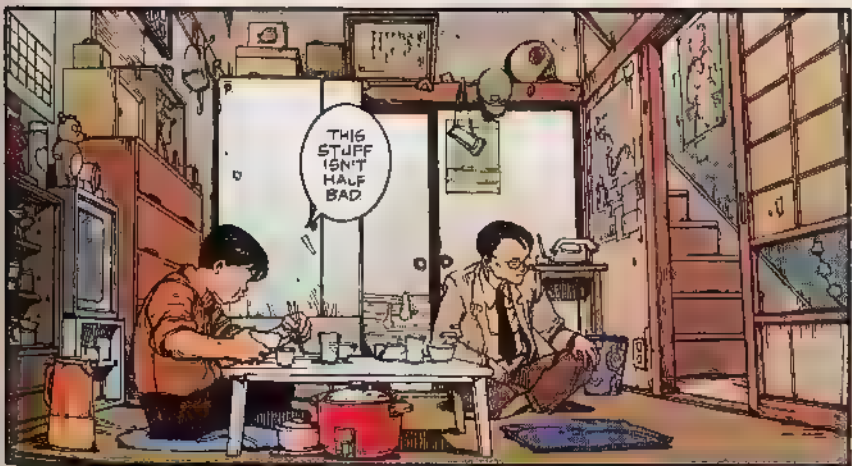
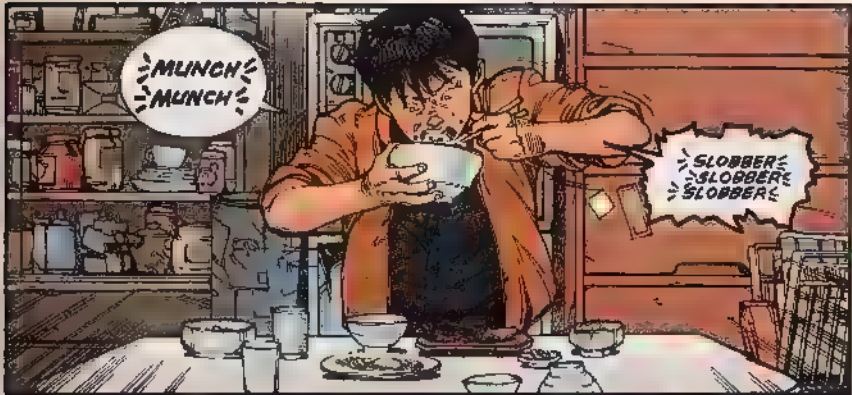


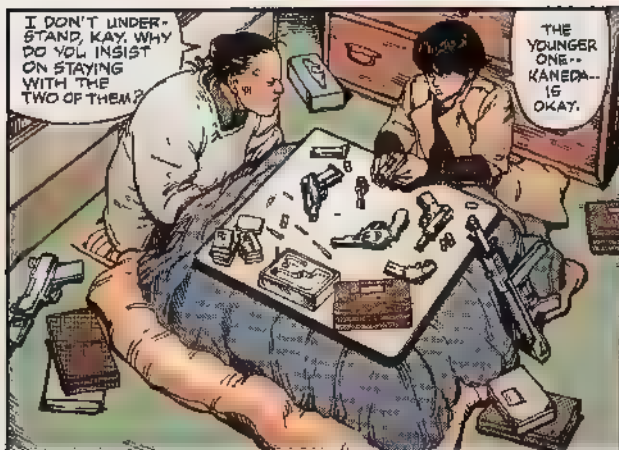










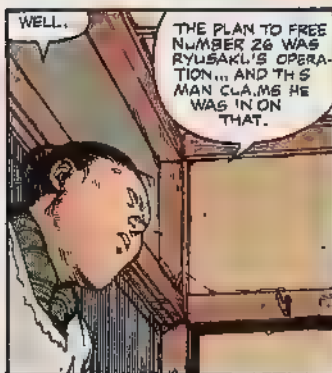


I DON'T UNDER-  
STAND, KAY. WHY  
DO YOL INSIST  
ON STAYING  
WITH THE  
TWO OF THEM?

THE  
YOUNGER  
ONE--  
KANEDA--  
IS  
OKAY.

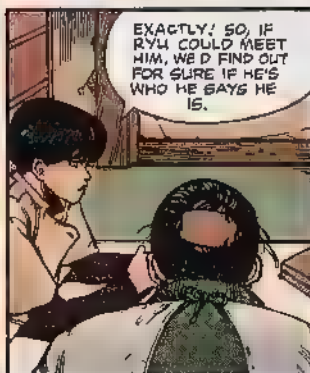


AS FOR THE  
GUY WITH THE  
GLASSES AUNTY  
CHIYOKO...



WELL,

THE PLAN TO FREE  
NUMBER 26 WAS  
RYUSAKI'S OPERA-  
TION... AND THS  
MAN CLAIMS HE  
WAS IN ON  
THAT.



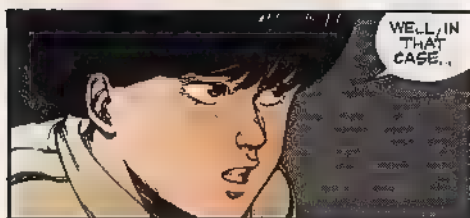
EXACTLY! SO, IF  
RYU COULD MEET  
HIM, WE'D FIND OUT  
FOR SURE IF HE'S  
WHO HE SAYS HE  
IS.



IT'LL BE TROUBLE  
YOU DON'T NEED  
IF I LEAVE HIM  
BEHIND AND HE  
TURNS OUT TO  
BE A PHONY..



AND F HE  
IS..

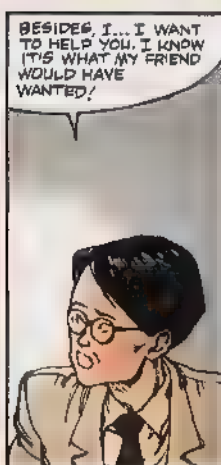
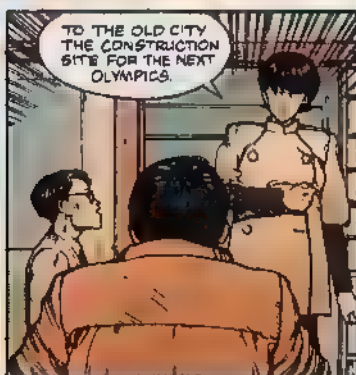
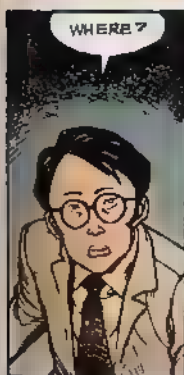
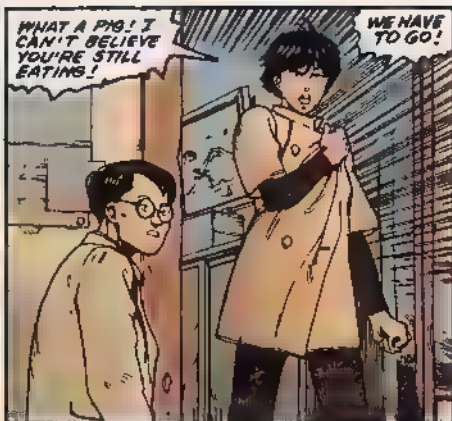
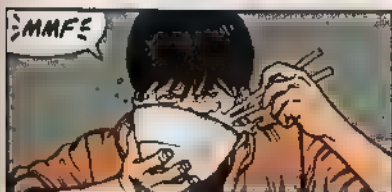
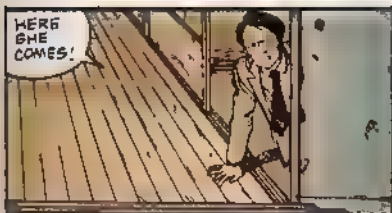


WELL, IN  
THAT  
CASE..



... I WANT TO BE  
THE ONE WHO  
TAKES CARE OF  
IT.







PLEASE DON'T  
TAKE THIS WRONG.  
I KNOW YOU  
HELPED JS .



... BUT WE DON'T  
TRUST YOU. WE  
CAN'T AFFORD  
TO

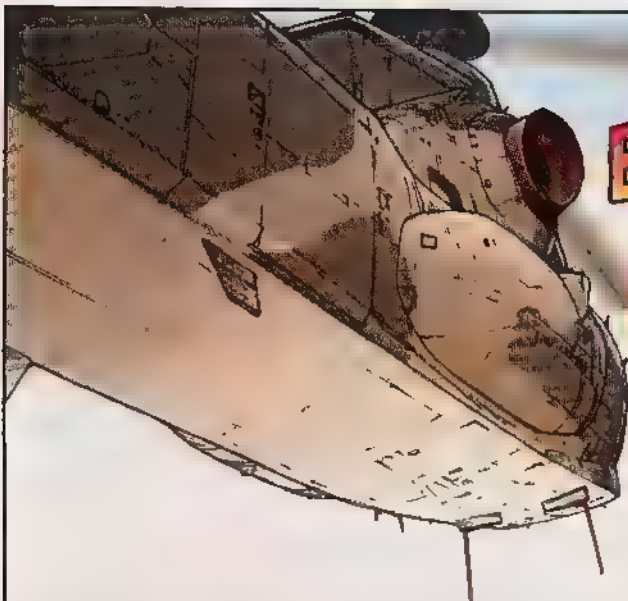


WE  
CAN'T?



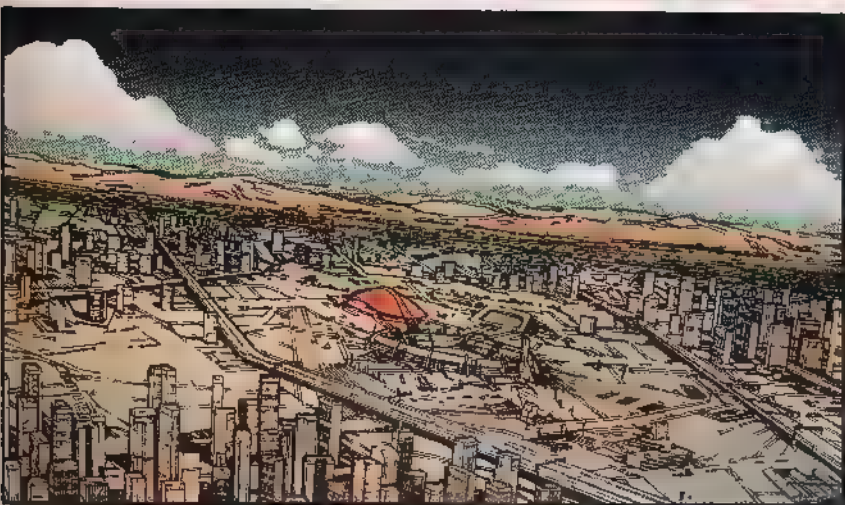
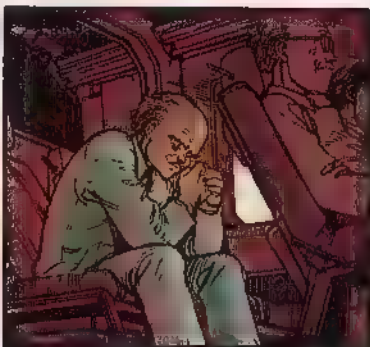
THAT'S THE  
WAY IT IS,  
HUNH?

I UNDERSTAND  
BETTER THAN YOU  
CAN IMAGINE

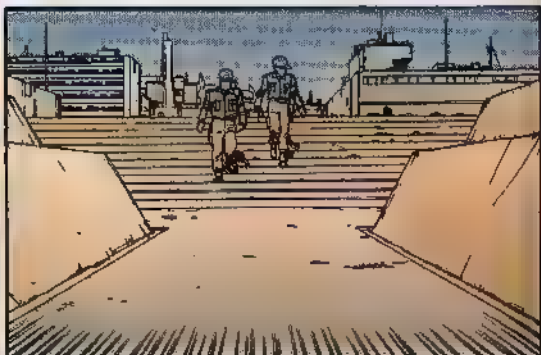


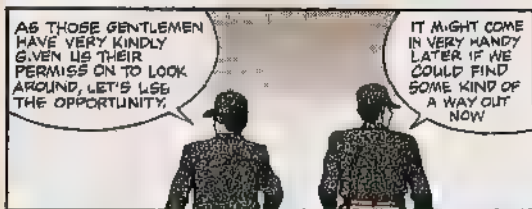
**BUDDA**

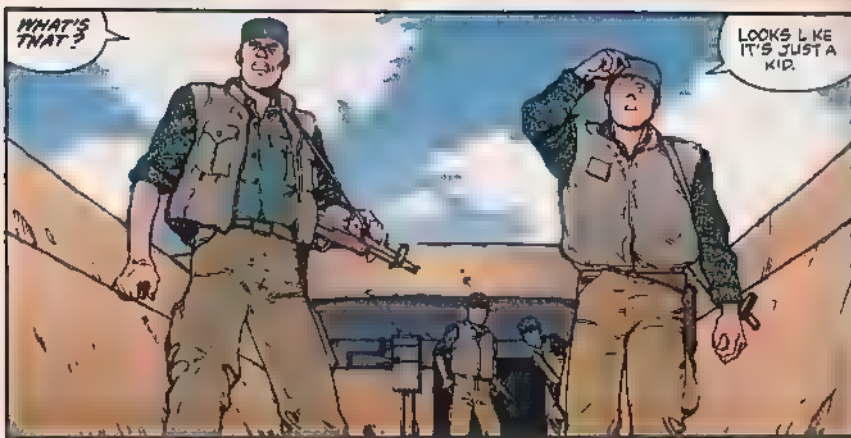
**BUDDA**



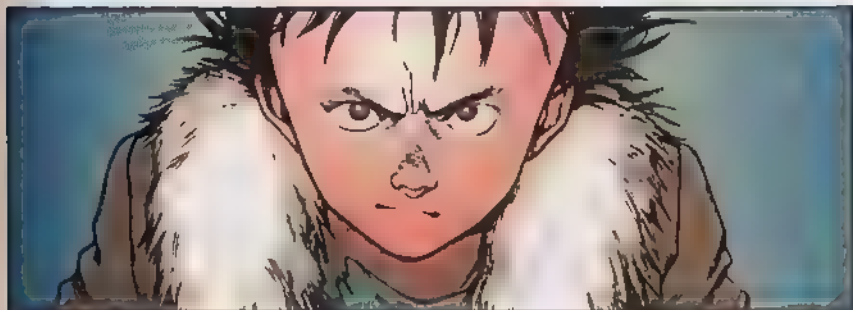
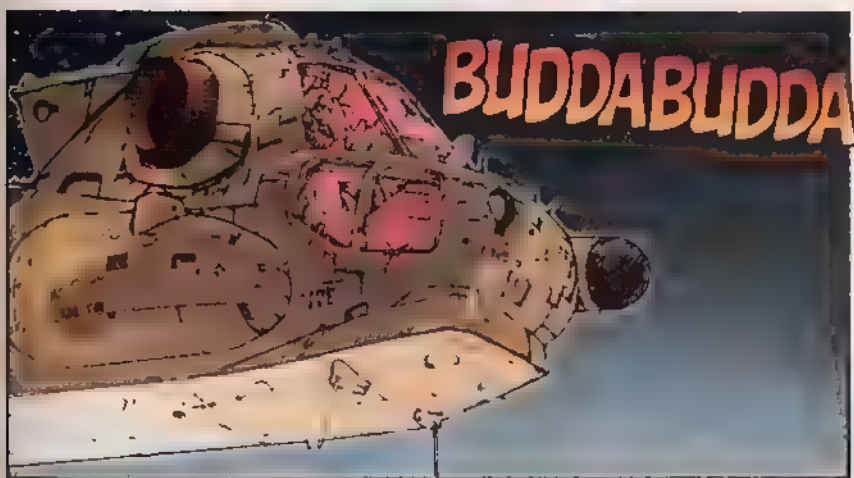
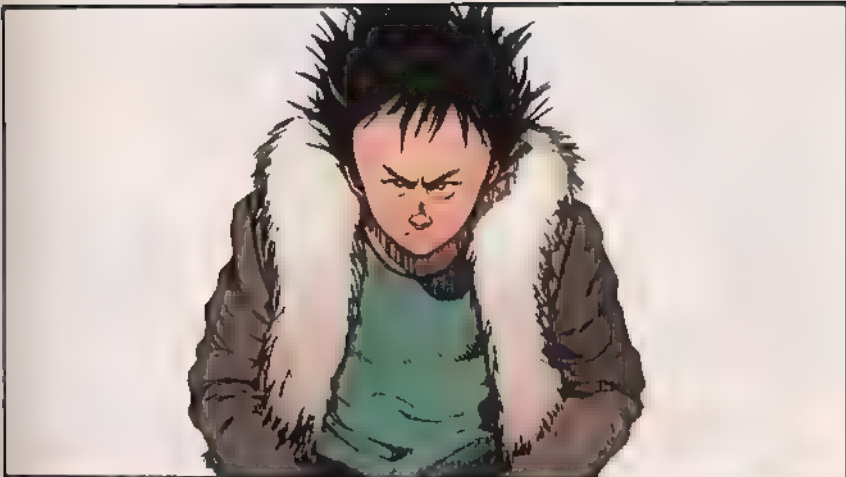


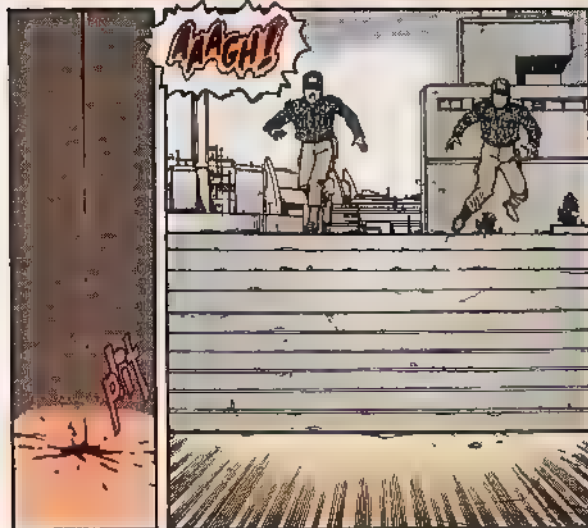
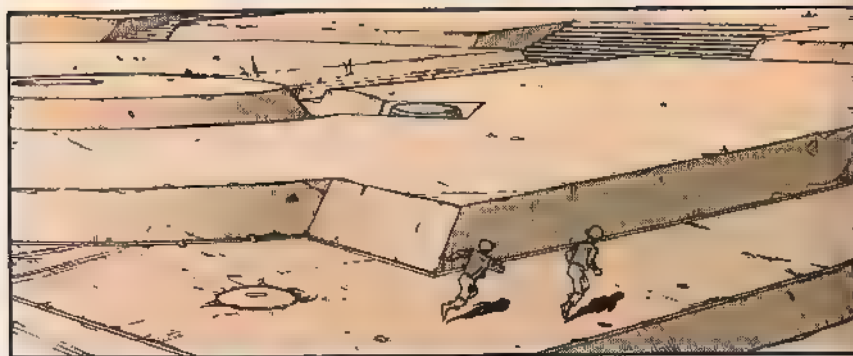
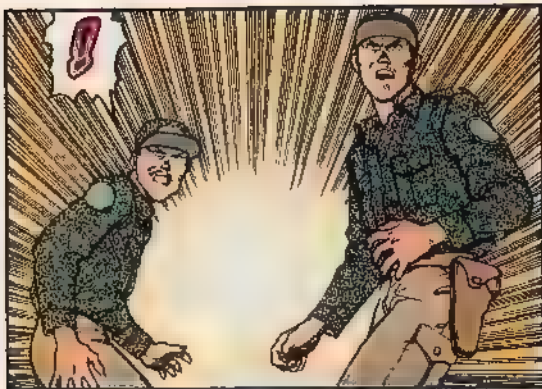




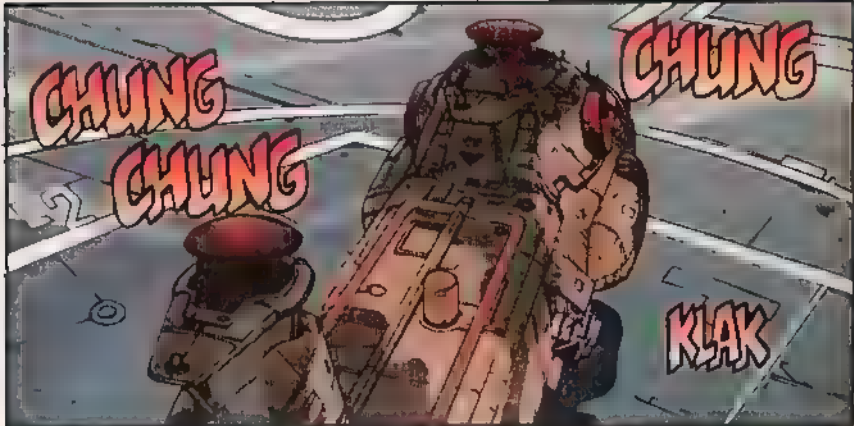




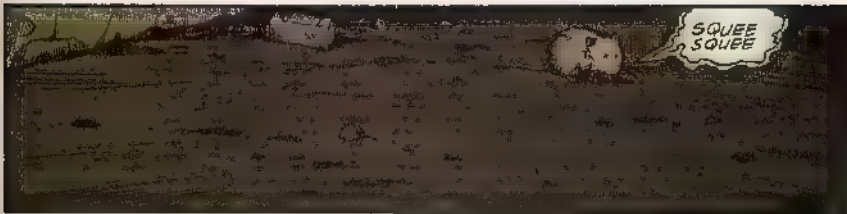












SQUEE  
SQUEE



SAME OLD,  
SAME OLD.  
THIS PLACE  
STINKS!



WHY DO WE  
ALWAYS  
HAVE TO  
TAKE THE  
SEWER?

OH,  
SHUT  
UP!

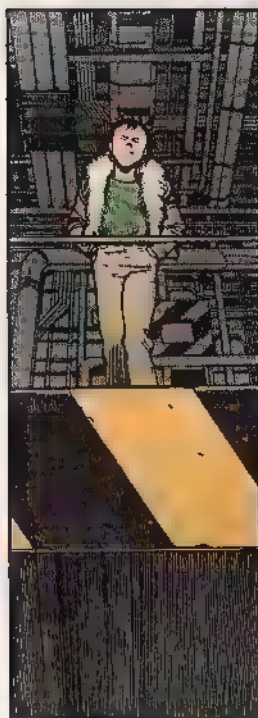
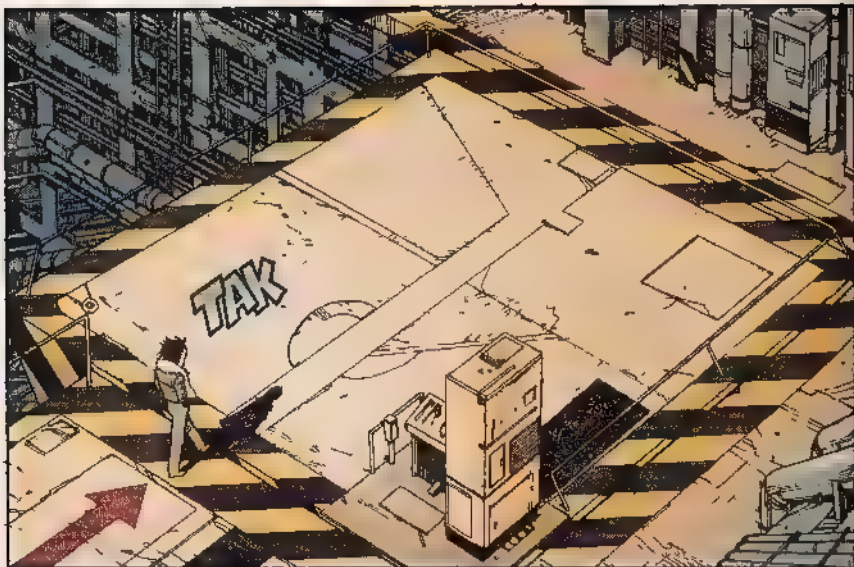


ARE YOU SENTIMENTALLY  
ATTACHED  
TO THIS  
PLACE,  
OR  
WHAT?

WE CAME THIS  
WAY BECAUSE  
IT'S THE ONLY  
WAY I  
KNOW.



NOW  
KNOCK IT  
OFF!

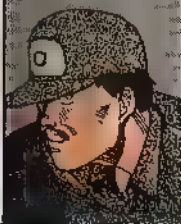


BE  
CAREFUL



I DON'T KNOW OF  
ANY KIND OF WEAPON  
THAT COULD DO WHAT  
WAS DONE TO THOSE  
GUYS, RYU.

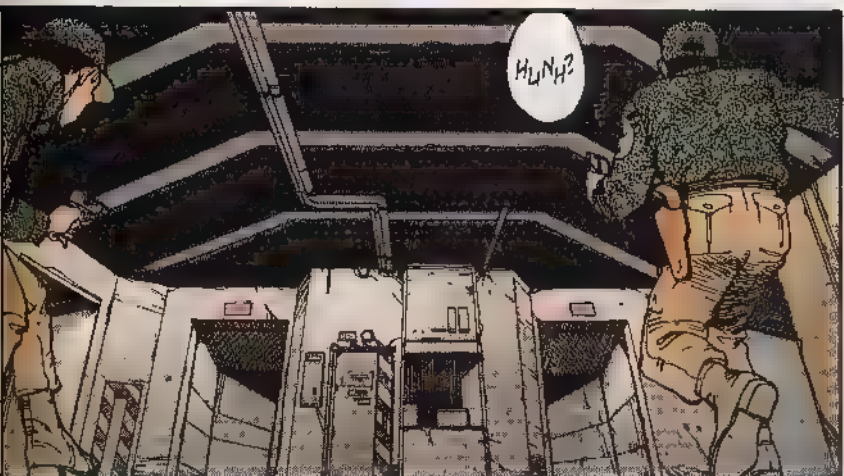
ME NEITHER

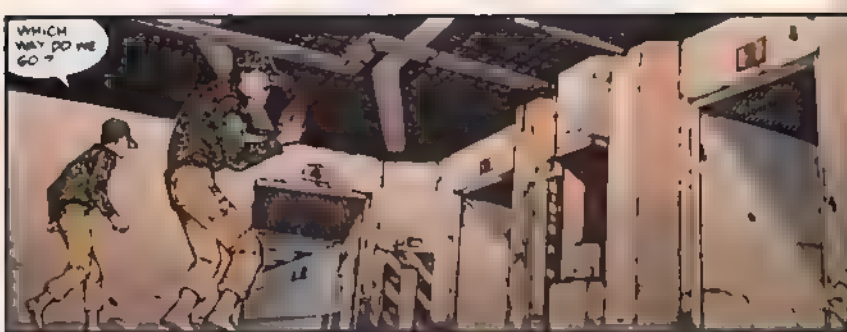


WHAT KIND OF  
MONSTER DO YOL  
SUPPOSE ..

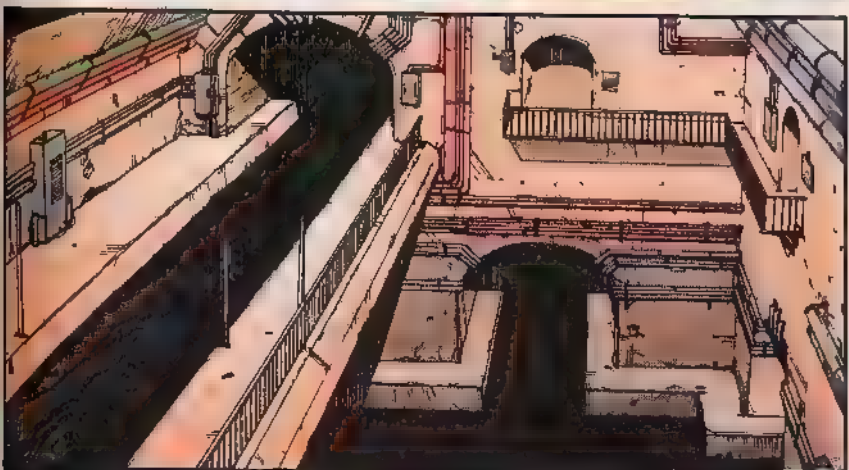
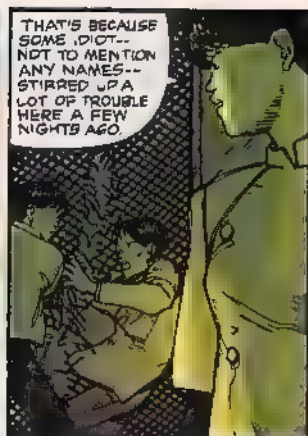


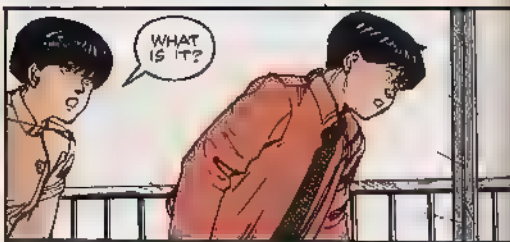
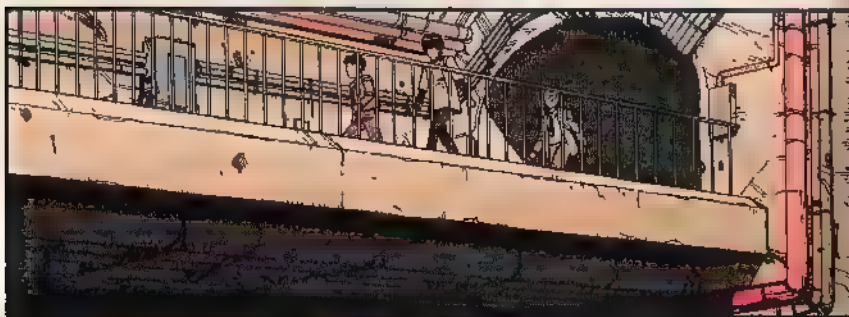
HUNH?

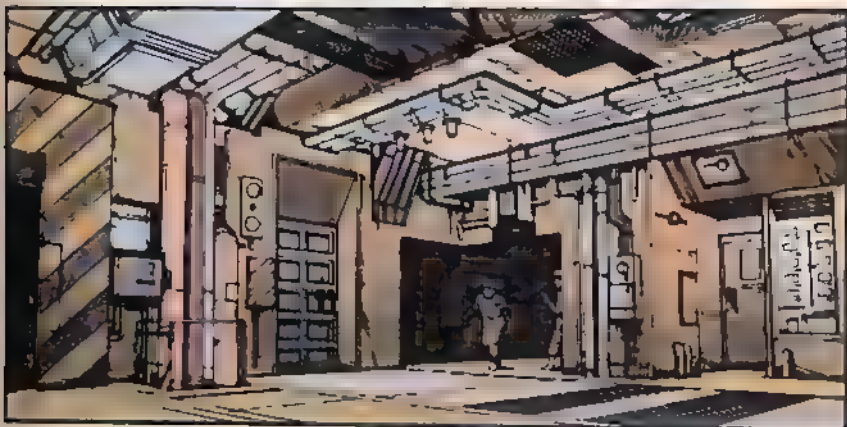
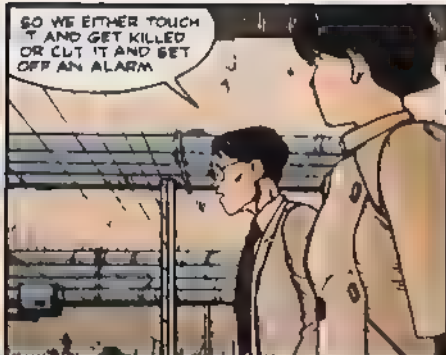
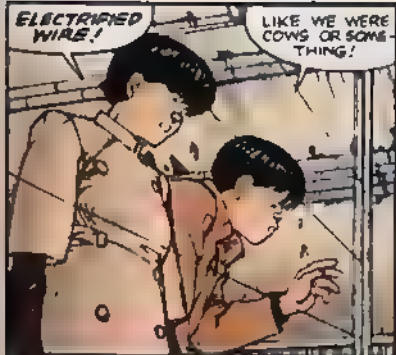


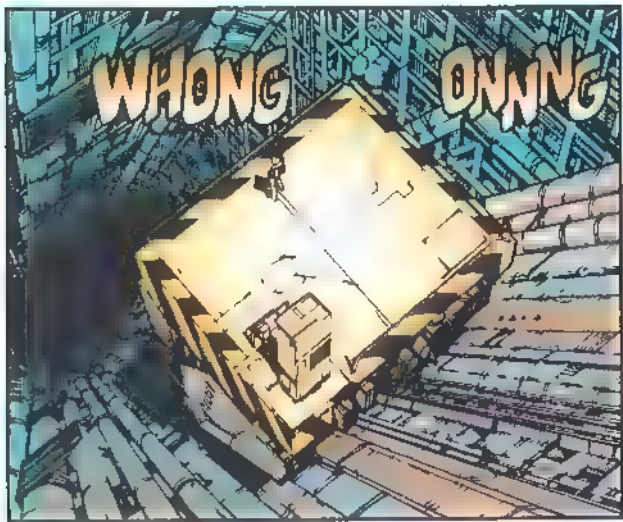
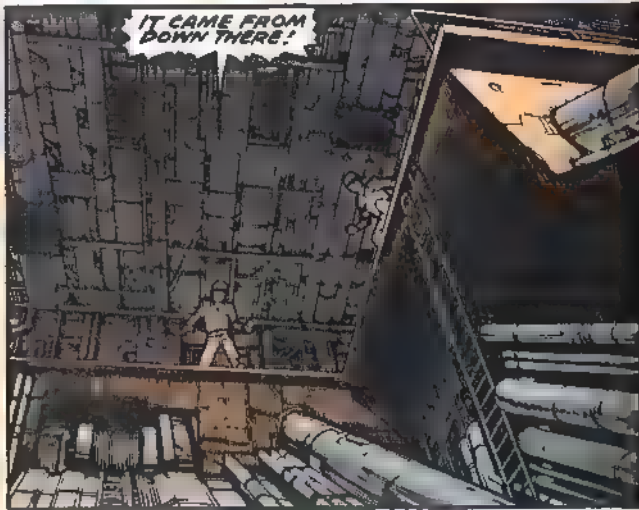
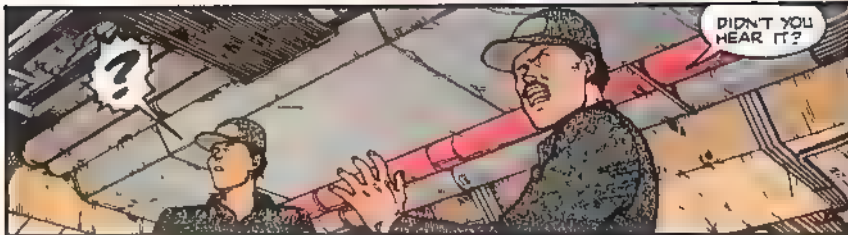




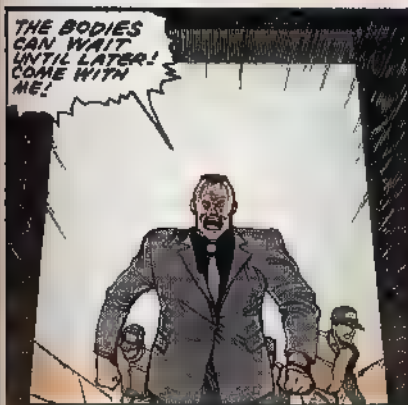
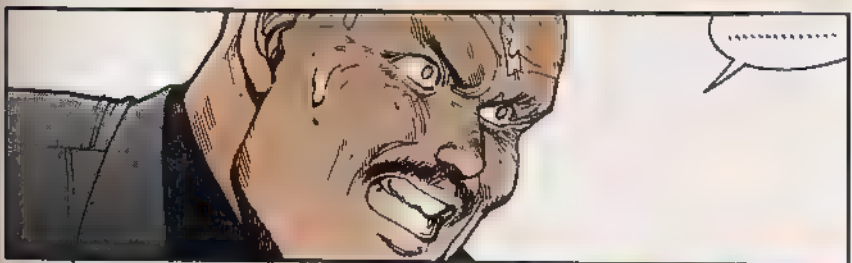
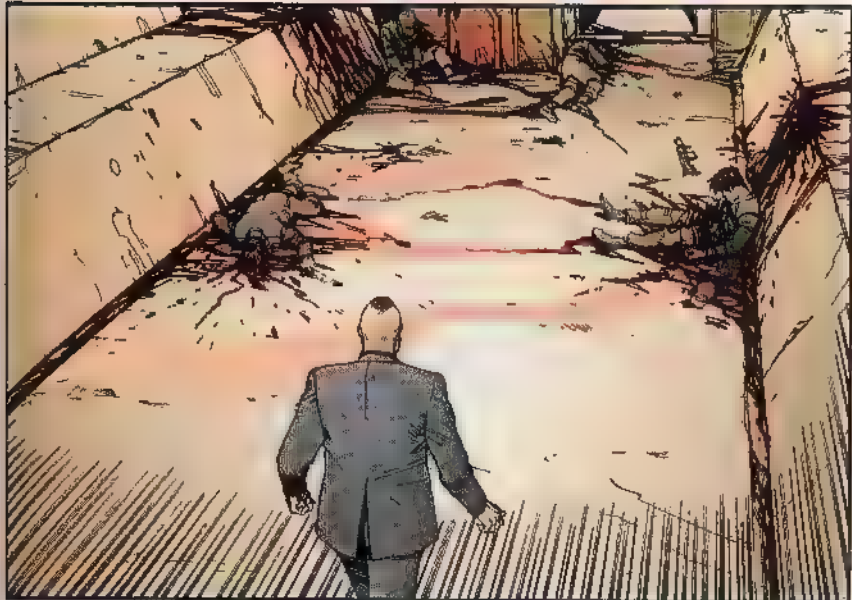














COLONEL! THE  
ELEVATOR'S  
ON ITS WAY  
DOWN!



DOCTOR,  
GET OVER  
HERE!



CHECK ON THE  
COOLING SYSTEM  
FOR AKIRA'S  
CHAMBER AT  
ONCE!

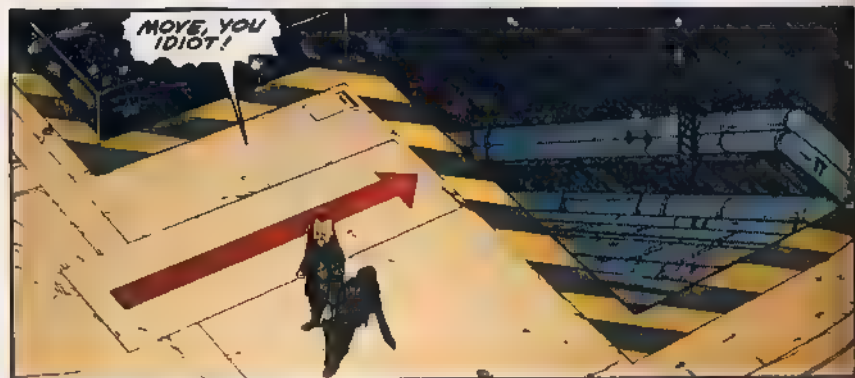


HAVE  
THEM POST A  
GARRISON AT  
THE UNDERPASS!



YESSIR!

AND SEE THAT  
THE FLYING  
SQUADRON IS  
STANDING BY!



MOVE, YOU  
IDIOT!



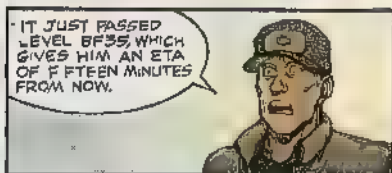
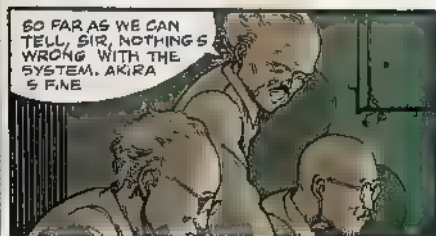
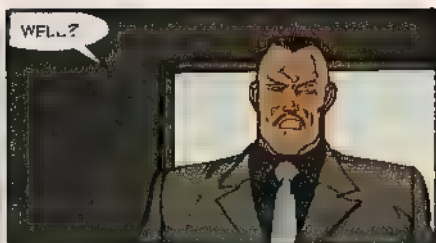
AWOOOOOOOOOOOO

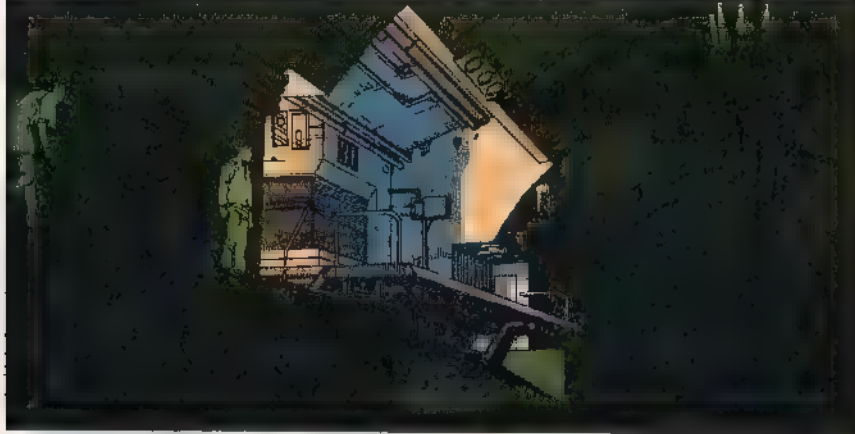
Ryu!!

DON'T  
PANIC!

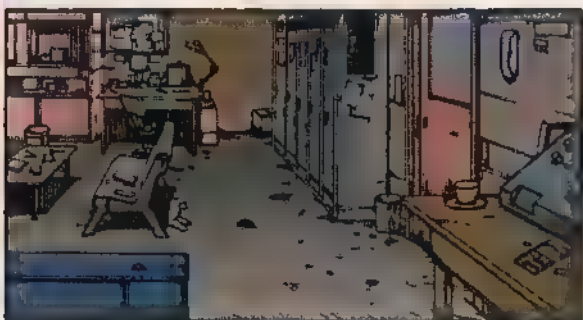
THEY'RE NOT  
ONTO US YET  
WHOEVER FOUND  
ALL THOSE BODIES  
UPSTAIRS MUST  
HAVE SET IT  
OFF







TAK  
TAK  
TAK  
TAK



'SOKAY! IT'S  
DESERTED.



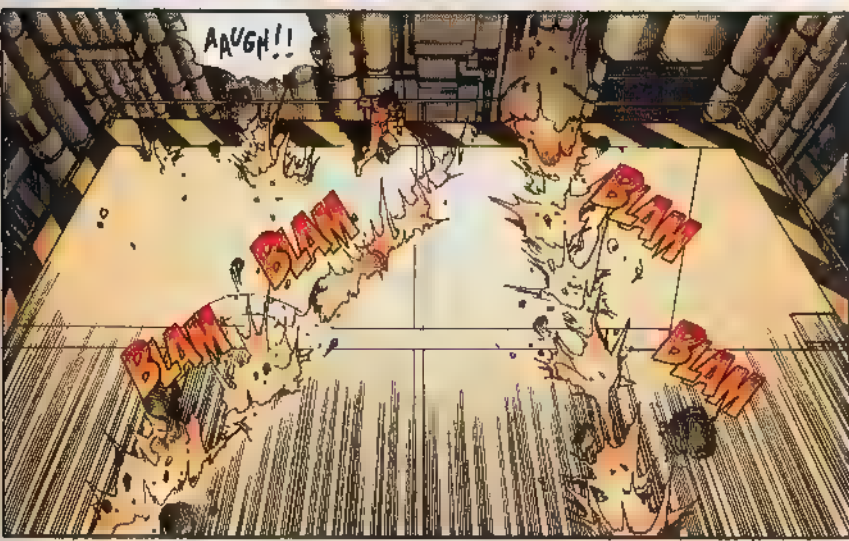
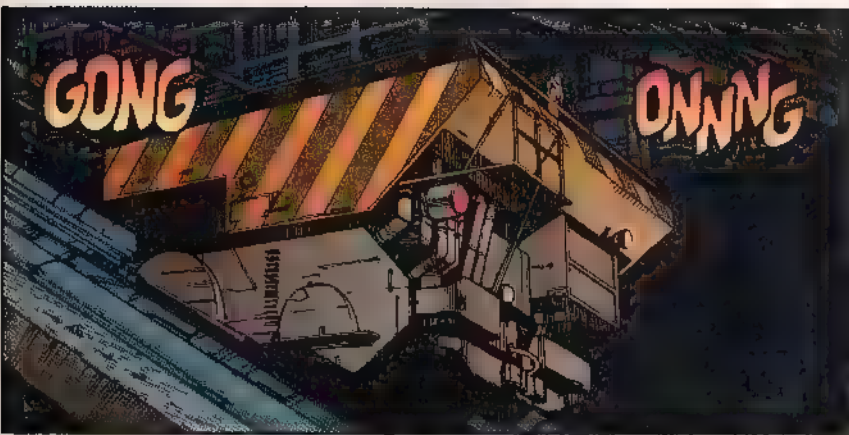
THEY MUST  
HAVE HAD TO  
REPORT  
SOMEWHERE  
WHEN THEY HEARD  
THE SIREN





GONG

ONING



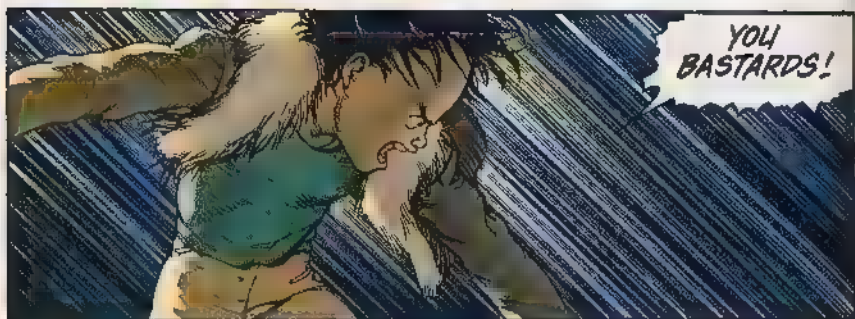
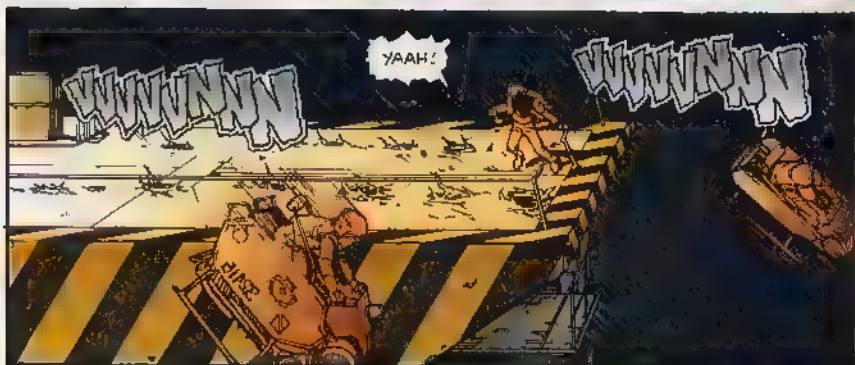
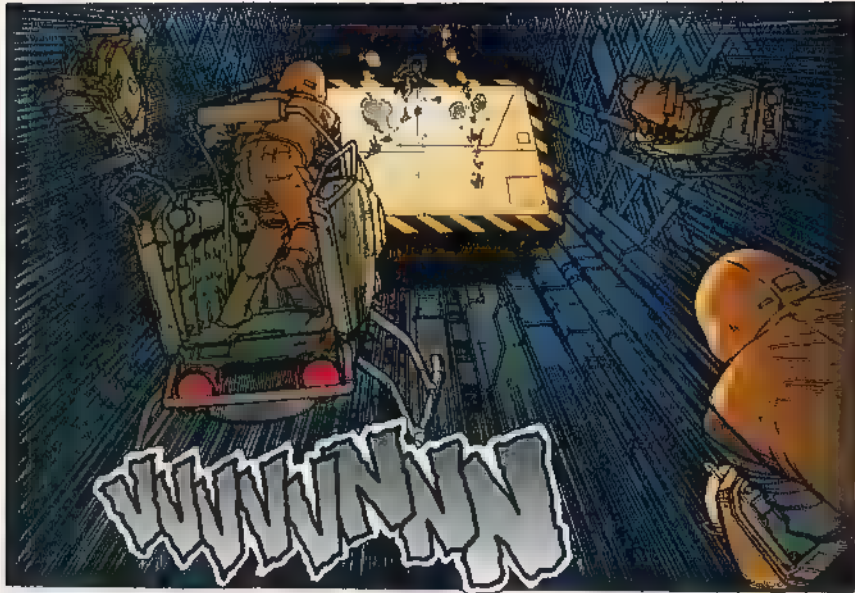
AAUGH!!

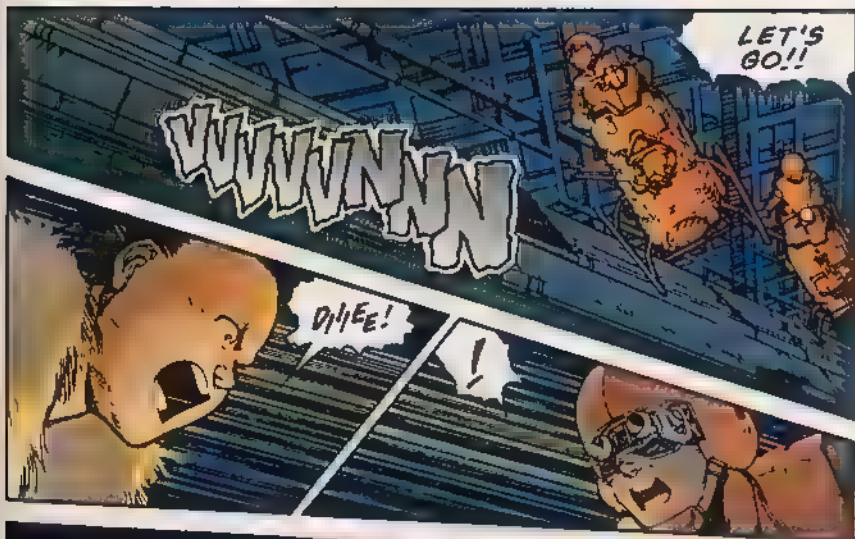
BLAM

BLAM

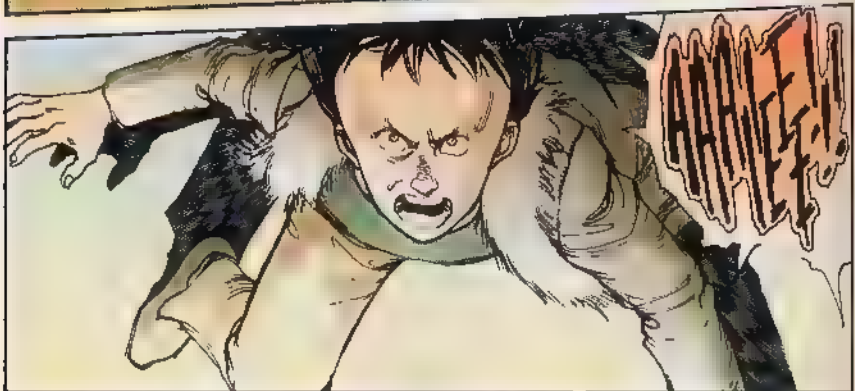
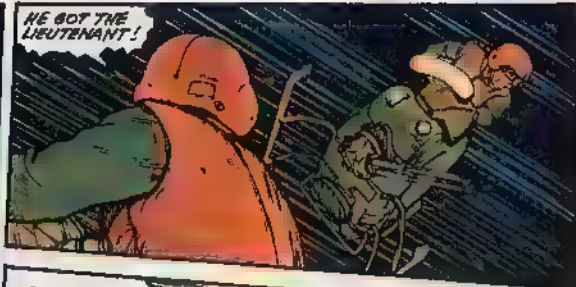
BLAM

BLAM

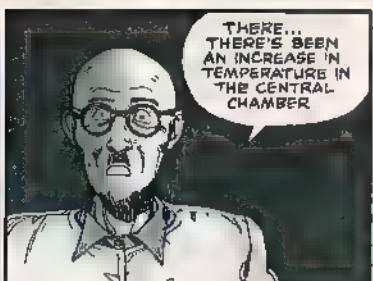
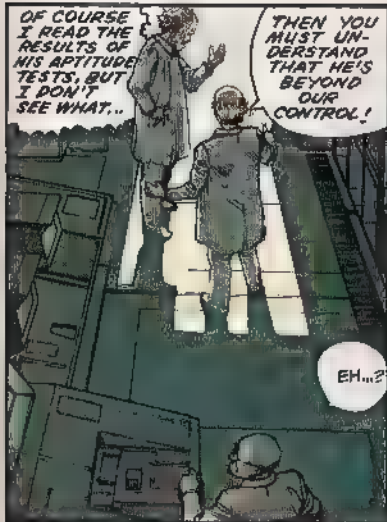








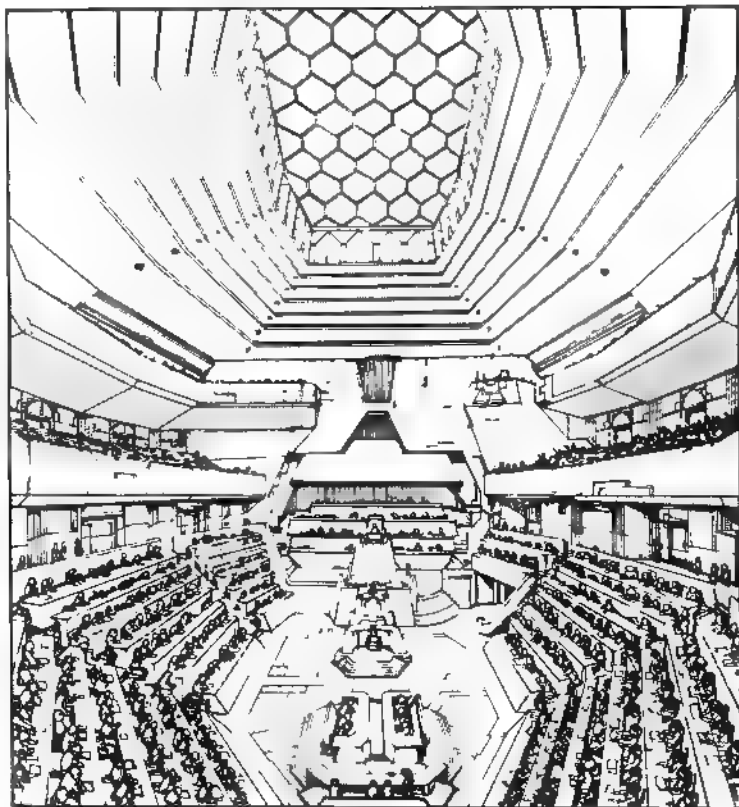


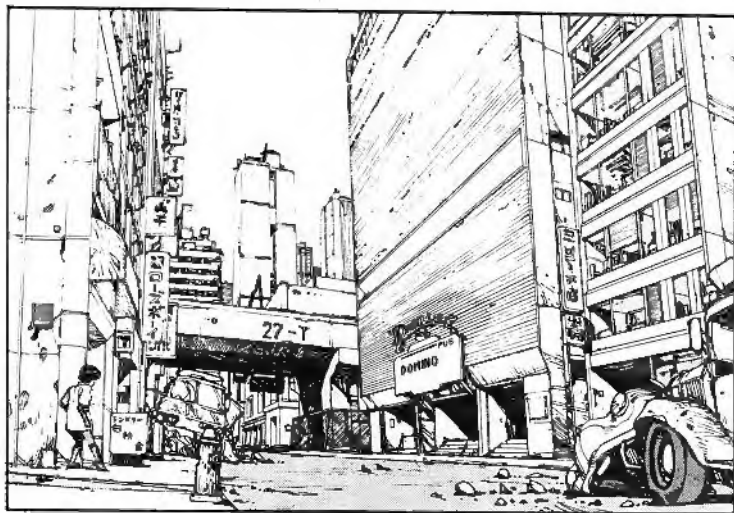
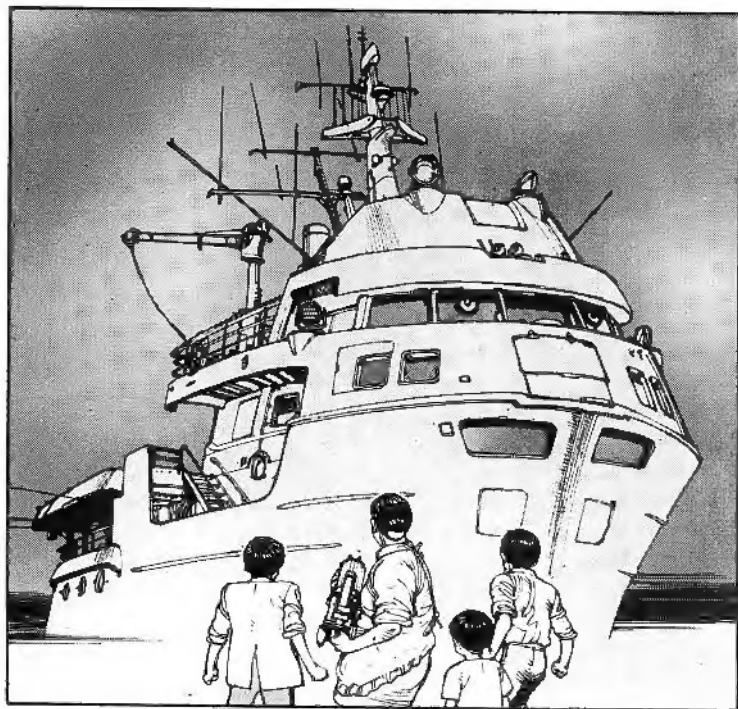


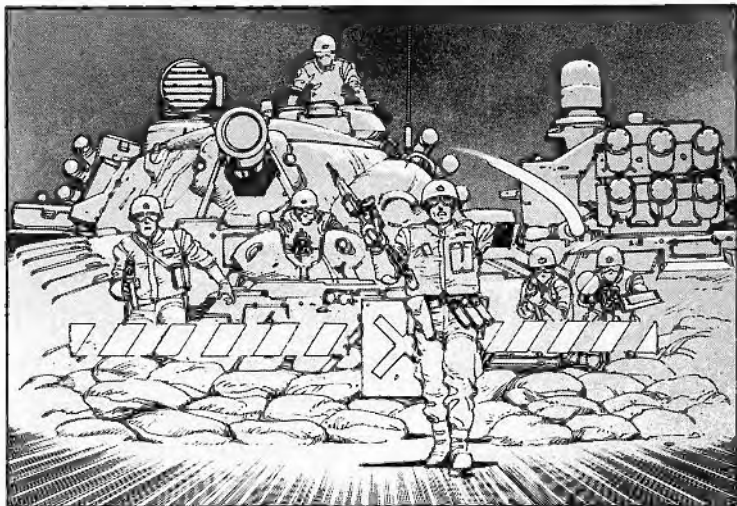
NEXT ISSUE: THE AWAKENING

# OTOMO GALLERY

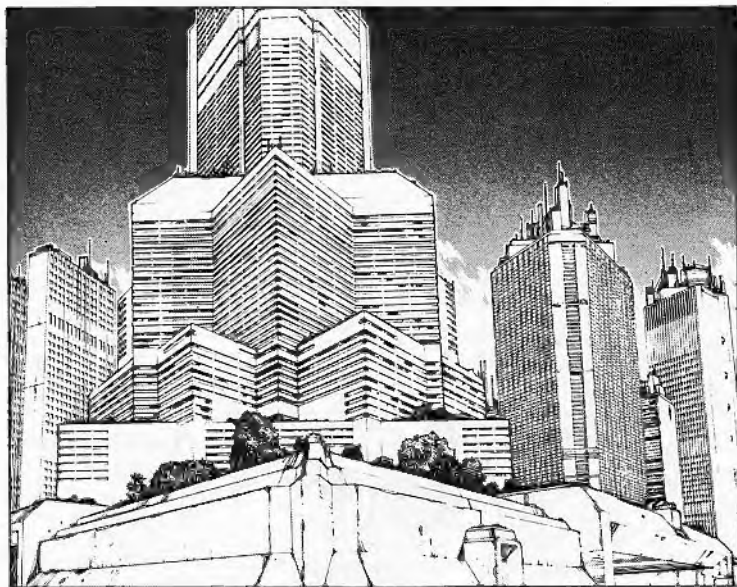
**R**ead ing *Akira*, it's natural to be swept along by its characters and story. Focused on these elements, it's so easy to overlook artist-creator Katsuhiro Otomo's many other virtues. For this gallery section, we've taken panels from up and coming issues that provide impressive examples of his approach to architecture and technical design. These elements are essential in conjuring the saga's convincing mood.







**F**rom the tanks and weaponry of a road block to the geometric array of city towers, Otomo uses this background material to make his science-fiction vision complete.





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**ARCHIE GOODWIN**  
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**E**scape. Somewhere on the streets of Neo-Tokyo in the year 2030 the young psychic-powered killer, Tetsuo, roams free of the secret government project where he learned of one possessing even stronger paranormal abilities than his own ... AKIRA. Tetsuo now knows where this mysterious being lies in cryogenic sleep and means to find him. Meanwhile the anti-government agent, Kay, and Tetsuo's former friend, Kaneda, are fighting their way out of the same project, hoping to overtake Tetsuo. They have the behind-the-scenes aid of three of the project's mutant children and an unexpected ally among their pursuers. But their escape, like Tetsuo's, can only send them stalking into an even greater, more ominous confrontation.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

